**cTemplate:COVID-19 communication to employees**

*Below are a communication template and guidelines that startup companies can send to their employees regarding the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Note that the sender will need to fill in some specifics based on how their venture wants to handle a range of elements, including office visitors, travel, flexible scheduling, remote work, etc. Please adjust the wording based on your unique business needs.*

**-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------**

**PLEASE READ THIS ENTIRELY**

At [Company Name], we are committed to putting our people first. With COVID-19 officially listed as a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO), and with so much yet to understand, we wanted to take a moment to let you know the extraordinary and proactive steps we are taking to ensure our team’s safety.

**Disclaimer: This document reflects our best knowledge at the time of writing and will be continually updated to incorporate new learnings as they surface.**

We have implemented a number of guidelines that will help us reduce exposure to and transmission of a range of illnesses, including novel coronavirus. **See [Company Name] Guidelines below.**

During this time, we want to emphasize:

1. **Communication with your manager** is very important. Please inform your manager if you need help in any way during these turbulent times.
2. We want to build increasing readiness and adoption of **virtual technologies** to better enable remote work. We are currently working to make sure that we have the right infrastructure, knowledge and best practices in place to ensure our success and continuity of operations.
3. We know that **social distancing** may also impact us in our personal lives, with the potential for school closures and/or transit reductions. [Company Name] is dedicated to supporting our employees, and we feel that we are in a position to minimize these issues by leaning into virtual work and interaction.

In the guidelines below, you’ll find our latest thinking on how [Company Name] will adapt its practices to ensure that we continue to deliver against our clients’ expectations, while also making decisions in a thoughtful manner that prioritizes the safety of our team. We ask that you also make responsible decisions in your personal life, avoiding concerts, sporting events, non-essential travel and other large public gatherings.

Of course, we will monitor incoming COVID-19 updates from the CDC and amend and adjust these guidelines at regular intervals as the situation develops. We thank you for your understanding and patience.

Sincerely,

[CEO sign-off]

***[We suggest you create the guidelines as a separate document and attach it to your communications.]***

**[Company name] Guidelines**

**Communication**

We want to highlight the **importance of communication** if/when you’re feeling threatened by the COVID-19 pandemic. Please remain in close contact with your manager.

*[If you have specific communication practices you would like your team to follow, insert them here.]*

**Safety precautions**

We are elevating our safety precautions. **If you are not feeling well**, you MUST work from home. In addition, we expect you to stay home for a minimum of two weeks after all symptoms have dissipated.

*[If you have specific safety precautions you would like your team to follow, insert them here.]*

We encourage you to follow **usual health precautions,** such as:

* [washing your hands often](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html);
* social distancing and avoiding interaction with those who are sick;
* refraining from touching your face more than is necessary;
* practicing proper coughing and sneezing etiquette;
* avoiding crowded events; and
* avoiding non-essential travel.

**Office visitors**

[*If you regularly have office visitors (e.g., friends and family, delivery people, third-party vendors, clients, etc.), insert your stance on them here.*]

*Our guidance:*

* *Consider preventing, when possible, all visitors other than delivery people from coming into the office, as many New York companies have.*
* *Consider placing rules on visitors, such as requiring that they self-identify travel outside of the country that has occurred within the past 14 days and rescheduling visits for after this self-isolation period has ended.*

**Work travel and local client visits**

[*If client visits and employee travel is part of your business, insert your stance on it here.*]

*Our guidance:*

* *Consider halting all work travel, including local client visits, as many New York companies have.*
* *Consider discouraging or alerting employees to the risks of personal travel and social gatherings, and outline the risks of visiting significantly impacted and densely populated areas. (Remember that these decisions will always remain the prerogative of the employee.)*

**Flexible scheduling**

*[If your business is able to allow for flexible schedules and cannot accommodate remote work, insert your stance on it. ]*

**Remote-work options**

*[If your business is able to provide remote work, insert existing, revised or new guidelines.]*

***Notes***

* *Keep apprised of the risks and adapt this plan as needed. Many Toronto-based companies with high face-to-face, client, office-visitor and employee interaction have already put remote-work plans in place. If your team’s productivity is lagging and fear is running high, pay attention to those cues.*